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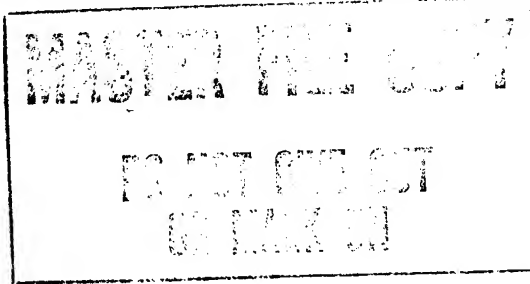
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Southern Lebanon: A Geographic Perspective on the Israeli Security Zone

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A Research Paper

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Southern Lebanon: A Geographic Perspective on the Israeli Security Zone

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A Research Paper

This paper was prepared by analysts in the Near East Branch of the Office of Global Issues. It was coordinated with the DIA. Comments and queries may be directed to the Chief, Geography Division, OGI, [redacted]

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**Southern Lebanon: A Geographic
Perspective on the Israeli
Security Zone**

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Summary

*Information available
as of 16 December 1985
was used in this report.*

Israel's continuing occupation of a security zone within southern Lebanon is designed to improve security conditions for Israel along the Israel-Lebanon border. The 5- to 20-kilometer zone is part of a layered defensive system developed to protect northern Israeli settlements from infiltrators and cross-border rocket attacks.

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The security zone overlaps part of the area patrolled by the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, a peacekeeping force established after the Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon in 1978.

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Israel began construction activities within the security zone almost immediately following its 1978 invasion. Since 1982 the predominant changes have involved improving and building new access and border patrol roads, adding and repositioning fixed defensive and observation positions, and building new military support facilities. At the southern edge of the security zone, along the 1949 Armistice Demarcation Line, the Israelis are building up their border security strip, which includes concertina wire, a security fence, a dragged strip—bare earth groomed to reveal the tracks of intruders—and a patrol road. In several places the border security strip crosses into Lebanese territory to take advantage of favorable terrain or to create a buffer near Israeli settlements.

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The security zone covers about 800 square kilometers, nearly half of Lebanon south of Sidon. Long neglected by Lebanon's central government, the south's poor agrarian economy has been further disrupted by the 1982 invasion and its aftermath. About 110,000 of the approximately 250,000 residents in the south live in the security zone, according to Israeli press reporting. Nearly half of the 110,000 are Shiite, although there are areas of Christian, Sunni, and Druze concentrations. Tel Aviv is aware that the Israeli occupation further radicalizes this religiously diverse area and contributes to its chronic instability.

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Israel is likely to withdraw its remaining forces from Lebanon only if a workable understanding on security arrangements for northern Israel can be reached with the moderate Shiite group, Amal, or a broader agreement on Lebanon can be reached with Syria. Barring such agreements—which we judge are unlikely in the near term—Tel Aviv will see no alternative to continuing its present operations in southern Lebanon. If, however, Israel makes a final withdrawal, the role of the border security strip will become even more important. In particular, Israel would have a strong incentive to retain control of about 14 square kilometers of Lebanese territory enclosed by the border security strip, including the Nab'al Wazzani (Wazzani Spring) on the Nahr al Hasbani (Hasbani River) east of Metulla.

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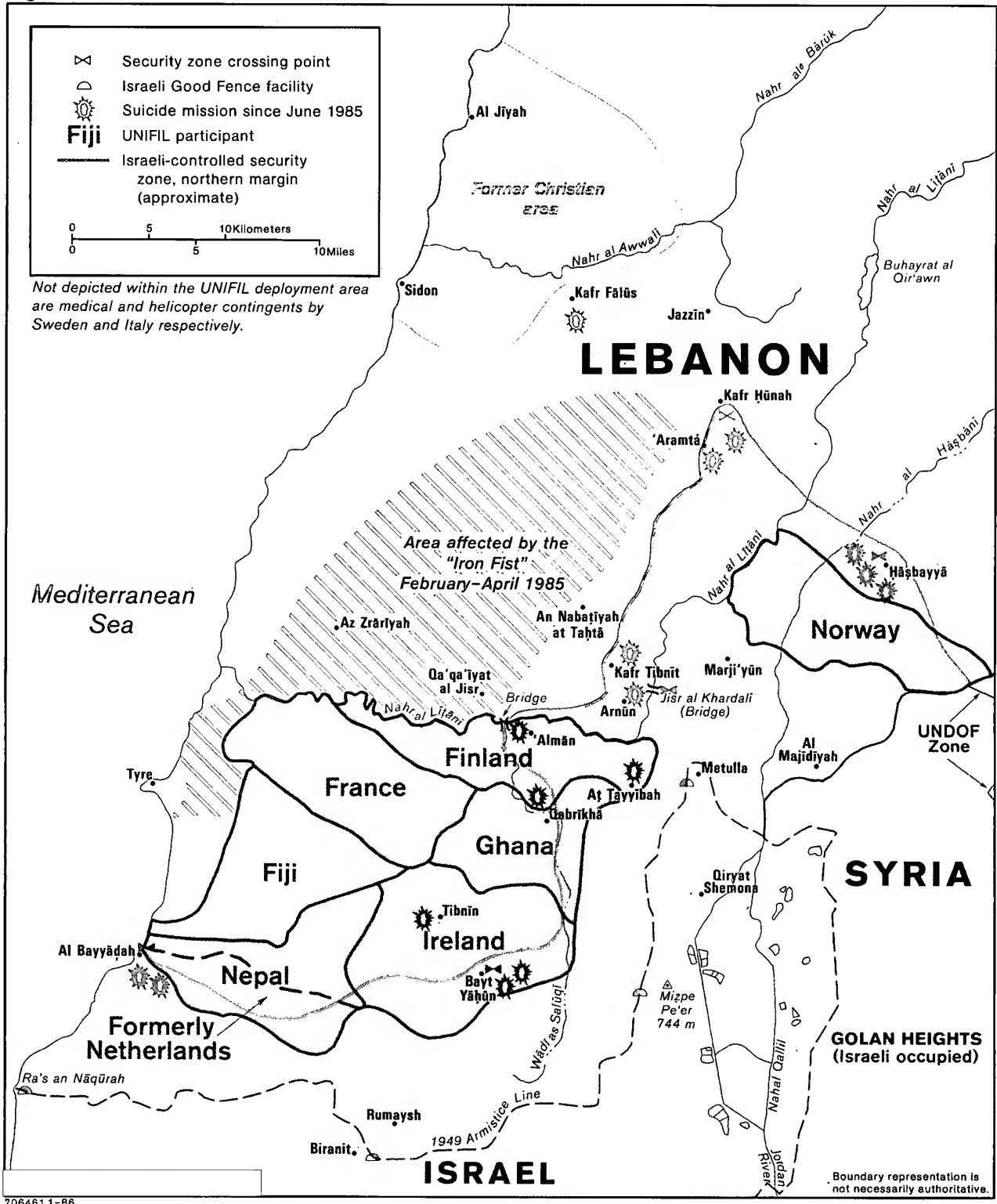
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Figure 1



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Southern Lebanon: A Geographic Perspective on the Israeli Security Zone

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Introduction

The present Israeli-created security zone in southern Lebanon owes its existence to Israel's desire for a secure northern border and has evolved from the security arrangements Israel established following its 1978 invasion of Lebanon (see figure 8 foldout). When Israel expelled the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) from southern Lebanon in the 1982 invasion, local residents—mostly Shiite—supported their military action. Today's situation is substantially different; an assortment of groups willing to engage Israel in limited military encounters operate in and through southern Lebanon. These groups include a variety of Palestinian militant factions; Lebanese Shias of moderate (Amal) and more radical (Hizballah) political and military orientation; and other non-Palestinian and non-Shia organizations, such as the Syrian Social Nationalist, Ba'th, and Communist parties. To reach the Israeli border, or to maximize their prospects of hitting Israel with rockets, these groups must infiltrate through the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) area of operation—not a difficult task in the Israeli view—and the Israeli security zone

This research paper analyzes the transportation network, water resources, and population makeup in the security zone and the changes that have occurred in the local economy and are occurring in the Israeli defense infrastructure within the security zone and along the border. Attention is given to the adjustments of the Israel-Lebanon border security strip that have taken place in the last few years and the likely disposition of these boundary changes in any future peace negotiations.

The Security Zone

The security zone is a buffer that runs from the coast to the Golan Heights and extends 5 to 20 kilometers into Lebanon. According to press reports, in mid-May

the Army of South Lebanon (ASL), Israel's indigenous surrogate force, issued identity cards to requesting civilians in the zone, but we do not know the geographic limits of the area involved or what demographic information was gathered by the issuing officials. To define the zone's boundary, we mapped the location of more than a dozen car bombings reported in the press to have occurred at crossings into the security zone and used Israeli press reports quoting Israeli Defense Forces' (IDF) official statements on five such crossings. We also included within the security zone most IDF and ASL deployment sites regardless of their occupancy status, because of the randomness with which they are occupied and the speed with which unoccupied positions could be reoccupied.

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Israel's military operations in the security zone are designed to interdict or counter unconventional threats that include Katyusha rocket and light artillery fire and guerrilla infiltration. According to a UNIFIL source quoted in the press, Israel maintains a 400-man battalion north of Hasbaya, a 100-man company north of the Qal'at ash Shaqif (Beaufort Castle), and another 100-man company within the Finnish battalion area of the UNIFIL zone. Other IDF units maintain liaison with the ASL in Marji'yun and man observation posts throughout the area. We estimate

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that Israeli forces in the security zone total up to 2,000 personnel, whose numbers and locations change from day to day depending on operational needs.

The IDF and ASL forces attempt to prevent the establishment of resistance groups and their infrastructures in the zone.

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Terrain in Brief

Figure A. Metulla Plain



Figure B. Mount Hermon

Southern Lebanon is predominantly hill country deeply dissected by the perennial Litani River, Hasbani River, and Nahr az Zahrani (Zahrani River) and their intermittent tributaries. A narrow discontinuous coastal plain fringes the Mediterranean in the west, and small flat areas extend north and west of Metulla (see photo of the Metulla Plain). From the north the Lebanon Mountains extend down into the hill country almost to Marji'yun, and in the east the steep slopes of Mount Hermon rise to the Syrian border (see photo of Mount Hermon). The hills of southern Lebanon have elevations generally between 150 and 1,000 meters, with their rounded summits rising about 100 to 200 meters above the narrow valley floors. Slopes are steep, especially along the larger streams and in the mountains, making cross-country vehicular movement difficult to impossible; movement conditions are slightly better in the valleys.

Water levels in the perennial streams are usually high from early January through April (the annual rainfall of about 30 inches falls from November through April). At times, the Litani River is 20 to 75 meters wide and 2 meters deep in most places—too deep for fording by conventional vehicles. The Zahrani River is equally wide near the coast, but only 10

to 20 meters wide inland and generally less than 1 meter deep. The Hasbani River below Al Wazzani is generally 10 to 20 meters wide and less than 1 meter deep. The intermittent streams flow for brief periods after heavy rains. The low-water season usually lasts from July through October, when even the Litani River is less than 1 meter deep.

The main roads in the area are hard surfaced and suitable for two-way military traffic. The other hard-surfaced roads are one lane and serve small towns and villages. The network is relatively sparse, however, providing few and poor alternate routes. Sharp curves and steep grades are common, and off-road dispersal would be hindered by the steep slopes. On the coastal plain, dispersal would be hindered by stone walls, orchards, and irrigation ditches. Concealment from ground and aerial observation is limited to scattered patches of trees, caves, and surface irregularities; buildings in the towns and villages; orchards on the coastal plain; and trees in places lining the banks of the perennial streams. Stream valleys provide cover from flat-trajectory fire.

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IDF-ASL forces man permanent and temporary road-blocks and observation points throughout the zone, conduct patrols and helicopter-supported security sweeps of villages inside and beyond the zone, back up Shin Beth operations, and occupy prepared defensive positions in the zone and along the Israeli border

Motorized equipment has been painted to make IDF and ASL units indistinguishable to the casual observer

Attempts by the ASL to increase its troop strength have been hampered because the southern Lebanese view the ASL as an Israeli surrogate force. Desertions whittled the strength of the ASL through early summer, but manning levels rebounded and stabilized

by late August 1985. Displacement of Christians from Sidon to Jazzin and to the security zone in April and May 1985 provided one source of new ASL recruits to offset the continuing attrition

ASL troop strength under Antoine Lahad at 1,200 to 2,600, consisting of more than 90 percent Christians and less than 10 percent Shias. Of these, we believe Lahad can muster up 1,800 to 2,000 troops, including troop support from the Chamounist National Liberal Party and from the Christian Lebanese Forces. About one-third of the ASL force is in the Jazzin area, outside the bounds of the Israeli-defined security zone

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Security Zone Construction

Israel began major construction activities within southern Lebanon almost immediately after taking control of it in 1978. Since 1982 the main activities have involved improving and building new access and border patrol roads, adding and repositioning fixed defensive and observation positions, and building new support facilities—military camps, revetted campsites, artillery positions, and forward supply sites. Since the 1982 invasion about 50 kilometers of new roads have been built or improved in the security zone, including those leading to prepared positions northwest of Ramyah near the border, stretching immediately south of the Litani River to the west of 'Alman, and extending north from the vicinity of Beaufort Castle to a point just east of An Nabatiyah at Tahta. Another new road skirts An Nabatiyah at Tahta on the north. During the occupation, the Metulla—An Nabatiyah at Tahta road was improved to support Israeli forces, and in the east a new road was built north from Shab'a to support positions now unoccupied near 'Ayn'Ata. [REDACTED]

These road projects suggest an Israeli attempt to secure high ground, the gaps between the UNIFIL-controlled areas, two bridges across the Litani River, and routes leading to Al Biqa' (Bekaa Valley). The road network in northern Israel has been upgraded, mainly by blacktopping existing one-lane roads, in part to improve communications from Israeli support bases to defensive positions along the border and to forces in Lebanon. [REDACTED]

Other construction projects have included a staging area for IDF convoys and a support and vehicle inspection building for a primary border crossing facility near Metulla. Similar border crossing facilities have been built south of Rumaysh and at Ra's an Naqurah. [REDACTED] Near Al Majidiyah, east of Metulla, the IDF or ASL has built a sizable detention center. [REDACTED] Also, the Israelis are building a port facility at An Naqurah for use by the ASL. [REDACTED]

Construction Along the Border

On the southern edge of the security zone, along the 1949 Armistice Demarcation Line, Israel has established a border security strip—a series of linear features about 35 meters wide. In a cross section from Lebanon to Israel, these features generally include concertina wire, a security fence, a dragged strip—groomed, bare earth that reveals intruders' tracks—and a hard-surfaced driving lane (figure 6). [REDACTED] the 80-kilometer boundary is being augmented in places with an antivehicle ditch and perhaps an underground sensor system on the Lebanese side and a parallel loose-surfaced lane for tracked vehicles on the Israeli side. [REDACTED]

Although the border security strip is for the most part on the Israeli side of the 1949 Armistice Demarcation Line, in places it crosses into Lebanese territory to take advantage of favorable terrain or to create a buffer near Israeli settlements. In at least two areas, these adjustments of the border security strip into Lebanon were made before 1978. Two other protrusions into Lebanon west of Qiryat Shemona—one near Markaba and another near Hula—were begun in 1980 and are now being connected by a new security patrol road that encloses about 2 square kilometers of Lebanese territory. These extensions, in effect, represent long-term, de facto Israeli incorporation of Lebanese territory. [REDACTED]

The most extensive construction by Israel of its border security strip within Lebanese territory is occurring north and east of Metulla. Here the Israelis are widening an existing, generally east-west patrol road, preparing a parallel dragged strip, and constructing a new patrol road to enclose a new observation post and defensive position. The area enclosed by these roads—slightly more than 10 square kilometers of Lebanese territory—is much larger than any other piece of territory previously enclosed by Israel's border security strip. Within this 10-square-kilometer area a generally north-south patrol road west of the Hasbani River

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is being widened, and a dragged strip is in preparation along its western edge. Construction on a second north-south patrol road—east of the Metulla military bypass—began in late October and was complete by mid-November. In the area, [] one partially abandoned village and three other much smaller villages that have been largely razed. Much of the land cut off from Lebanese access is arable, although it probably has not been used for agriculture since about 1980. []

Lebanese officials and media have previously criticized what they claim have been Israeli border changes in this area. In August 1984 the Lebanese Government brought charges to the United Nations that Israel had moved boundary fences 3 to 5 kilometers into Lebanon to ensure control over the Wazzani Spring on the Hasbani River, a major source of water for the Jordan River. At that time, Israel denied the charges. []

although a UN ground inspection team reported that 1.2 kilometers of fencing had been in place but was removed before the inspection. Additionally, [] between 1968 and 1971 the Israelis moved their Golan Heights border security strip north of the village of Al Wazzani. The generally east-west border patrol road in this area, built in 1979 and now being improved, crosses the Hasbani River about 200 meters north of the Wazzani Spring and is connected to the Golan Heights portions of the border security strip. []

The Security Zone and UNIFIL Overlap

Israeli operations in southern Lebanon are complicated by overlap of the security zone with the UNIFIL operational area.¹ We estimate that the area of overlap is about 200 square kilometers, about one-fourth of the security zone. Nearly 20,000 civilians live in the overlap area, of whom about one-fourth are Druzes, Sunnis, and Christians living in the Norwegian area, with the remainder almost entirely Shias living south of the Litani River. Despite UNIFIL-IDF-ASL friction in the overlap area and the likelihood that Israel will continue to operate in southern Lebanon regardless of the UN position, the UN Secretariat believes UNIFIL should extend its area of responsibility south to the international boundary. Such a change, which would interfere with IDF-ASL operations in Lebanon, is opposed by Tel Aviv and is not likely to come about in the foreseeable future. []

¹ UNIFIL'S mandate, provided for by UN Security Council Resolutions 425 and 426 of 1978, calls on UNIFIL to confirm the withdrawal of Israeli forces, to restore international peace and security, and to assist the Government of Lebanon in ensuring the return of its effective control to the occupied area. When it was established in 1978, UNIFIL deployed along the northern edge of the area then occupied by the Israeli-supported militia led by Sadd Haddad. Because the present security zone extends farther north than the former "Haddad Land," most significantly to points north and west of the big bend in the Litani River and north to Kafr Hunah, the security zone overlaps the UNIFIL area of operations. []

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Friction exists in the overlap area because UNIFIL's peacekeeping efforts are caught up in the IDF-ASL effort to control the local populace. Nearly all of the Norwegian area and parts of the Finnish, Ghanaian, Irish, and Nepalese areas fall into the overlap area. UNIFIL troops and local civilians have had few problems with IDF-ASL operations in the French and Fijian areas that were deeply affected by the Israeli "iron fist" policy during the early stages of their withdrawal between February and April of 1985. Incidents have occurred nearly every day since June 1985, however, in the Nepalese, Irish, and Finnish overlap areas. According to press [redacted] reporting, the incidents have ranged from ASL kidnapping of UNIFIL troops to arrests of civilians and the destruction of homes by the IDF and the ASL in village sweeps similar to those during the "iron fist" period. [redacted]

Population of the South and the Security Zone

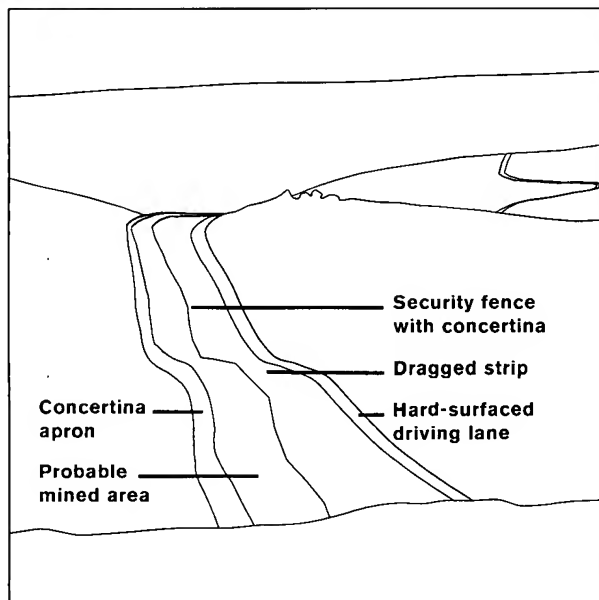
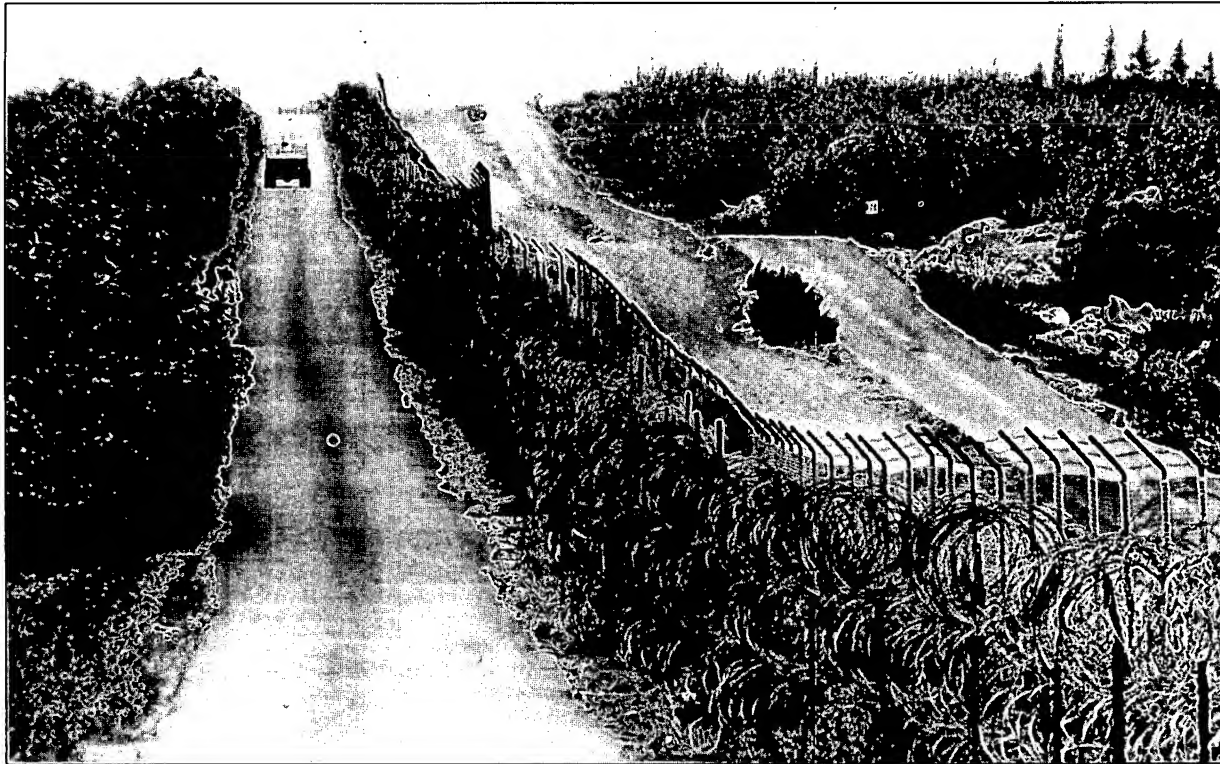
We estimate that before the start of the civil war in 1975 the indigenous population of southern Lebanon south of Sidon totaled about 325,000 people scattered in some 400 towns and villages.² By the time of the first Israeli invasion in March 1978, the number had fallen to about 130,000. By the second invasion in June 1982, the population had rebounded to between 60 and 80 percent of pre-civil-war levels, or 195,000 to 260,000. We estimate [redacted] that the current population is about 250,000, of whom nearly 110,000 live in the security zone. Population density within the zone declines westward from [redacted]

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Figure 6. Israel-Lebanon Border Security Strip. One-lane, hard-surfaced road on the Lebanese side of the boundary, 1974 (upper photo). Schematic of the border security strip (lower left); along most of its length, from the coast to the Golan Heights, the border security strip includes the parallel features of concertina wire, security fence, dragged strip, and hard-surfaced road. Looking east from near Zar'it, Israel, 1984 (lower right).

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Yatar to the coast, a decline that correlates with diminishing arability of the land in this area that was hit hard during fighting between the Lebanon-based PLO and Israel in the 1970s. [] at least a dozen villages scattered along the 1949 Armistice Demarcation Line are abandoned, some uninhabited since at least 1978 []

Sectarian Composition and Distribution

We estimate that within southern Lebanon Shias constitute 75 percent of the population, Christians 13 percent, and Sunnis and Druzes about 6 percent each. Sectarian composition within the security zone is more balanced. []

[] Shias make up 46 percent of the population, Christians comprise 28 percent, and the numbers of Sunnis and Druzes are almost equal at about 13 percent. []

Within the security zone:

- Christian villages are mostly in northern and eastern Marji'yun district, although a handful are located along the Israeli border in south-central Bint Jubayl district. The major Christian towns are Marji'yun and Al Qulay'ah in the north and 'Ayn Ibil in the south.
- Druze and Christian villages, exhibiting a fair degree of integration, are interspersed in a belt between 5 and 15 kilometers from the Lebanon-Israel-Syria border in Hasbayya and Rashayya districts. Hasbayya is the principal town in this area.
- Sunni Muslim villages, chief among them Shab'a, dot the western slopes of Mount Hermon, forming the only concentration of Sunnis in southern Lebanon outside of Sidon and Tyre.
- The remainder of the security zone is populated by Shias, concentrated in the area south of the Litani River and west of the 'Emeq Hula (Hula Valley). []

Palestinians

Israel hopes to prevent the reintroduction into the south, particularly into the security zone, of militant Palestinians who were the principal targets of Israel's

1978 and 1982 invasions. We have no quantifiable information about the number of Palestinians in the security zone today, but doubt that their number is significant. After the Arab-Israeli war of 1948, many [] had established themselves in villages in Lebanon along the Israel-Lebanon boundary in what is today the security zone. Many of these villages are now abandoned. Most Palestinians who fled Israel into Lebanon in 1948 moved into refugee camps—mainly clustered around the coastal cities of Tripoli, Beirut, Sidon, and Tyre. []

Palestinians are not an enfranchised group in Lebanon and often are not included in statistical surveys of the population. According to US Embassy Beirut reports, the total number of Palestinians living in Lebanon is about 400,000. Of these, the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) carried 256,000 on its registered rolls in June 1985, of whom 132,000 reside in 11 camps. The three camps just north of the security zone near Tyre—Al Buss (El Buss), Burj ash Shamali (Burj el-Shemali), and Ar Rashidiyah (Rashidieh)—shelter between 34,000 and 40,000 persons. There are no camps in the security zone. The only other UNRWA camps in the south, one north of Al Bisariyah (Bayssrieh) and the other west of An Nabatiyah at Tahta (Nabatieh), are unoccupied. []

The Splintered Economy

The economy of the south, which is mainly agricultural, is now split in two and is adversely affected by the presence of the security zone. Markets exist in urban areas away from the security zone—Tyre, An Nabatiyah at Tahta, Sidon, and Beirut. The trip to market for security zone residents is difficult because of IDF-ASL control of vehicular traffic between the zone and the remainder of Lebanon. According to the Israeli press, civilians are allowed to cross at only five places—Al Bayyadah, Bayt Yahun, Jisr al Khardali (Khardali Bridge), Kafr Hunah, and Hasbayya. The process is hampered by licensing restrictions, personal identity procedures, tight security because of the potential for car bombings, and frequent closure of the crossing points. []

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Key Locations**Administrative Areas and Towns**

Lebanon is divided into five principal administrative provinces, each is further divided into one or more qada (districts). The area of Lebanon south of Sidon covers all or part of nine districts, the security zone overlays parts of seven of these districts, including nearly all of Marji'yun districts.^a [redacted]

Tyre (30,000) . . . between 34,000 and 40,000 Palestinians living in three nearby UNRWA camps . . . population estimate covers area as far as 'Ayn B'al . . . about 60 percent Shia, 30 percent Sunni, remainder Christian . . . significant Amal presence . . . major coastal urban area north of the Israeli border . . . minor marketing center and small fishing port . . . administrative center for Sur district. [redacted]

Sidon (100,000) . . . about 70 percent Sunni, 20 percent Shia, 10 percent Christian . . . largest city in south Lebanon . . . administrative center for Al Janub (The South) Province . . . minor port . . . two close-by UNRWA camps, 'Ayn al Hulwah (Ein el-Hilweh) and Al Miyah wa Miyah (Mieh Mieh), house about 30,000 registered Palestinian refugees and are the likely focus of future fighting. [redacted]

^a Numbers given here and in figure 7 are our best estimates for village- or town-level population for June 1985, the date of the last phase of the Israeli withdrawal. These estimates are based on historical data from unclassified Lebanese, Israeli, and European sources [redacted]

Jazzin (12,000) . . . Christian . . . northernmost position held by the ASL, although disclaimed as part of the security zone by Israel . . . population inflated by 2,000 to 4,000 Christians who remain following their displacement from villages near Sidon in the spring of 1985 . . . administrative center for the largely Christian Jazzin district . . . defensively well located on the rim of a cliff that falls steeply to the west. [redacted]

Az Zrariyah (8,000) . . . mostly Shia . . . town hardest hit by Israel's "iron fist" actions between February and April 1985. [redacted]

Bint Jubayl (8,000) . . . mostly Shia . . . largest town and administrative center in Bint Jubayl district (see photo). [redacted]

An Nabatiyah at Tahta (25,000) . . . mostly Shia . . . largest marketing center in the south . . . controlled by Amal . . . administrative center for An Nabatiyah district . . . nearby UNRWA camp abandoned . . . presides over junction of main roads between southern Lebanon Mountains and westward access to the sea. [redacted]

Al Khiyam (3,000) . . . about 90 percent Shia and 10 percent Christian . . . important base for ASL operations. . . abandoned before the Israeli occupation, but now partly reinhabited . . . reported in the press as the site of an underground ASL prison. [redacted]

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Figure C. Bint Jubayl

Hasbayya (2,500) . . . about 60 percent Druze; remainder mostly Greek Orthodox with some Maronite, Catholic, and Sunni . . . administrative center of Hasbayya district . . . most significant religious center for the Druze.

Marji'yun (8,000) . . . almost entirely Christian, about 50 percent Greek Orthodox, most of the remainder Catholic, few Muslims . . . administrative center of Marji'yun district . . . important to Israelis as a gateway to the Bekaa Valley . . .

Other Features

Tapline . . . The Trans Arabian Pipeline that stretches from oilfields in Saudi Arabia through the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights to the Lebanese seaside refinery at Az Zahrani . . . closed since the Arab-Israeli war of 1967 . . . continue to discount frequent allegations that the Israelis use Tapline as a conduit to move Litani River or Hasbani River water to the Golan Heights.

Az Zahrani Petroleum Refinery . . . near terminus of defunct Tapline from Saudi Arabia . . . severely damaged by Israelis before and during early days of the 1982 invasion . . . now point of entry for fuel for oil-fired power plant near Al Jiyah.

Beaufort Castle . . . ruins of a Crusader castle . . . at the big bend in the Litani River . . . former PLO stronghold and vantage point overlooking the fertile, heavily populated Hula Valley in Israel . . . now occupied by IDF.

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Communications With Israel

According to press reports, commerce between Lebanon and Israel now amounts to about \$500,000 per month through the security zone via border crossings.

[] four crossing points are operable. Press reports state that these serve as international crossings with custom facilities and/or as "good fence" crossings with health clinics and other facilities to specifically serve the population of the security zone. Ra's an Naqurah is only for "international" crossings, Metulla and Biranit serve both functions, and Mizpe Pe'er is solely a "good fence" crossing. Other "good fence" crossings that operated before the 1982 invasion are at least temporarily closed, although the facilities remain intact. In early June the Israeli press reported that as many as 50 trucks a week crossed the border where consignments are transferred to Lebanese trucks. About 500 southern Lebanese cross monthly to work in Israel. Press reports claim that commerce is also carried on through the security zone via the ASL-controlled port facility in An Naqurah. []

Agriculture

Agriculture is the mainstay of southern Lebanon's economy and is even more important in the security zone. Separate agricultural data are not available for the security zone area. The principal cash crop in the south is citrus, grown largely in the coastal area, mostly north of the security zone. The second most important crop is tobacco, cultivated mostly inland and especially south of the Litani River, near and within the security zone. Nearly 60 percent of the Lebanese citrus crop is grown in the south; virtually all tobacco is grown there. We estimate, on the basis of our analysis of Lebanese open-source reporting, that the south produced more than half of Lebanon's 1981/82 citrus crop valued at 488 million Lebanese pounds (roughly \$125 million at the 1982 conversion rate). The tobacco crop in the south earned less than 40 million pounds (\$10 million). We calculate that the security zone contributed less than 40 percent of the south's citrus production and more than 50 percent of the south's tobacco crop earnings. []

Production of both crops in southern Lebanon fell severely following the 1978 and 1982 Israeli invasions. Citrus production has fallen about 25 percent

from the preinvasion levels of nearly 400,000 metric tons to a current level of about 300,000 metric tons. According to open sources, more than 4,000 hectares of citrus orchards have been lost since the mid-1970s to either war damage or urban land use. In 1982 about 7,700 hectares of citrus orchards remained productive in southern Lebanon. Tobacco production has fallen more dramatically, based on Embassy reports. In 1981, 7,722 hectares of land were licensed for tobacco production, but less than 3,440 were actually cultivated. By 1982 production had fallen to less than 4,370 metric tons from a record production of 9,880 metric tons in 1973, a drop of 56 percent. Lebanese officials estimated in 1983 that tobacco production could again exceed 9,000 metric tons if security conditions were normalized. []

Poor security and war damage have been the chief causes of falling production. Repeated military activity has damaged fields and orchards and destroyed water systems and irrigation channels. In some areas, tending fields and orchards is dangerous or impossible. Many workers have left the area because of the hostilities or the attraction of better economic and social conditions in the cities. Transportation bottlenecks, which severely interfered with getting produce to the main market in Beirut between 1982 and 1984, are less frequent now that the coastal highway is open. Transportation into, out of, and through the tobacco growing area, however, remains extremely difficult because tobacco is grown in the midst of the security zone that suffers from a proliferation of roadblocks controlled by assorted military forces. []

Water in the Security Zone

Israeli policy concerning Lebanese water resources within the present security zone has long been of concern to the Lebanese. Most of the apprehension has focused on Israeli intentions and actions related to the Litani and Hasbani Rivers. The other streams in the area are minor, and most flow only intermittently. Although sorely needed for agriculture, Lebanese Government irrigation projects planned for the Litani and Hasbani Rivers have not been implemented in the

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south, mainly because the central government has not controlled the area since 1975. Israeli water-related actions in southern Lebanon provide mixed signals on Israeli water policies for the area. According to UN reports and the Lebanese press, Israeli military authorities prohibit Lebanese farmers from drilling new wells, presumably to conserve water in aquifers shared with Israel. At the same time, []

[] since 1976 Israel has piped small quantities of its own water to several villages in the security zone.

The Litani River

The Litani River—Lebanon's main water resource—rises in the Bekaa Valley, flows through a part of the security zone, and enters the sea near Tyre. Lebanese hydroelectric development about 40 kilometers north of Metulla alters the direction of most of the Litani River's flow. The river's waters are impounded in the Buhayrat al Qir'awn (Al Qir'awn reservoir) from which nearly 450 million cubic meters (mcm) are annually diverted westward to the Nahr al Awwali (Awwali River) basin for power production. The remainder of the reservoir's annual discharge, about 25 mcm, flows to the south, toward the security zone. This water combines with about 120 mcm collected in the middle part of the Litani River basin to produce the nearly 145 mcm that flow annually through the big bend near Beaufort Castle. []

Proposals to divert the Litani River southward have repeatedly surfaced in Israel and are a source of apprehension for the Lebanese. At least in part because Lebanon already diverts most of the Litani into the Awwali River basin, we doubt Israel will undertake a unilateral diversion in the near term. The Israeli occupation of the security zone, however, does delay Lebanese plans to exploit the river for irrigation in southern Lebanon. []

The Hasbani River and Wazzani Spring

The Hasbani River flows in a southerly course from its headwaters north of Bakkifa through the security zone, for a short distance along the western edge of the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, and finally into Israel where it feeds the Jordan River. The river flows year round only south of the Wazzani Spring, which contributes well over a third of the river's annual flow of 150 mcm. []

The Wazzani Spring, a significant water source for Israel, became a focus of contention between Israel and its neighbors in the 1950s and 1960s. A joint Lebanese-Syrian-Jordanian project to divert the spring's waters across the Golan Heights to Jordan was halted following Israeli attacks shortly after work was started in 1964. At that time, Syria effected a de facto shift of its boundary with Lebanon northward so that the proposed diversionary canal from the spring would be in Syrian territory. The spring is now controlled by Israel, guaranteeing its continued flow south and preempting its local use without Israeli acquiescence. []

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Outlook

The Peres government is aware that Israel's continuing occupation of southern Lebanon is helping to radicalize the Shia community by giving the fundamentalist, radical Hizballah movement cause to undercut the credibility of the mainstream, more moderate Shiite group Amal. Israel is concerned that radical groups are likely to intensify attacks against Israeli forces in the security zone and attempt cross-border operations, and that their example of militant resistance might embolden West Bank activists to greater violence in the occupied territories. Israel is likely to withdraw its remaining forces, however, only if a workable understanding can be reached with Amal, or a broader arrangement on Lebanon can be engineered with Syria. Barring such arrangements—which are unlikely for the near term—Tel Aviv doubtlessly sees no alternative to continuing to prop up the ASL []

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[] and to strengthening its observation and defensive positions within Lebanon and along the border itself. []

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If Israel eventually makes a "final" withdrawal, the defensive role of the border security strip will become more important. Although the threat of retaliation for any cross-border attacks and possible assurances from Lebanese leaders and Syria would be important considerations in Israel's postwithdrawal defensive policy,

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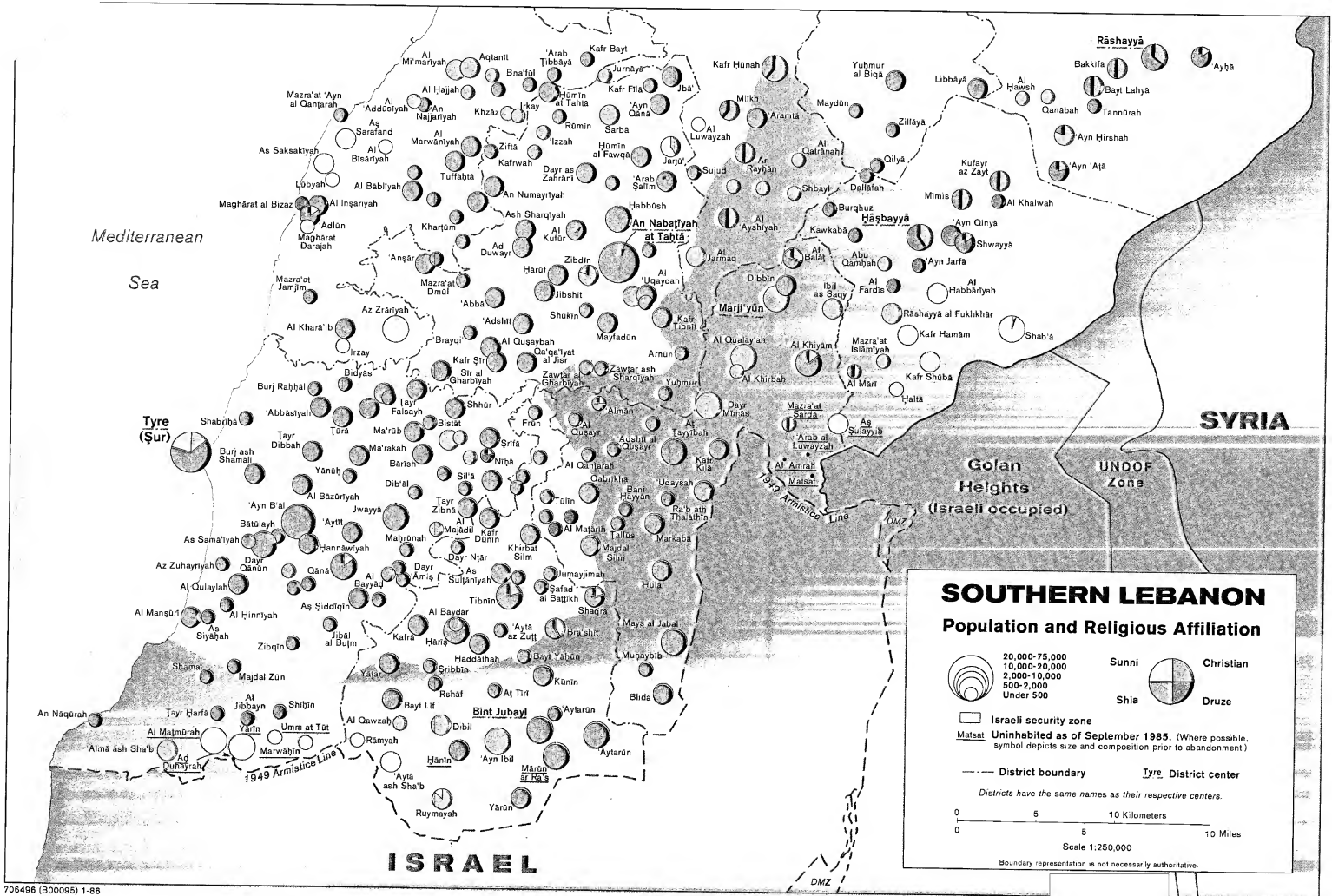
Israel would want to maximize its independent capability to deter infiltrations and shelling from across the border. In the event Israel and Lebanon were to eventually negotiate a boundary agreement as part of a peace settlement, we believe Israel would have a strong incentive to retain control of the border security strip segments that extend into Lebanese territory.



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